OF GOOD PLANTS AND USELESS WEEDS: PLANNING AS A SPATIAL TECHNOLOGY OF THE GARDENING STATE

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Abstract

The article deploys Bauman's metaphor of the 'gardening' state to consider the imbrication of planning and the dark side of modernity. It interrogates the public production and defence of urban spaces suitable for people deemed to have value. Using empirical material from urban Zimbabwe, I frame planning as a spatial technology of the gardening state and peer into its handling of informality under two main themes: first, the perception, construction and designation of 'weeds'; and second, the declaration and treatment of the 'weeds'. Situating Bauman's metaphor in the nexus between planning, the state and informality, I conclude that the metaphor paints a helpful but inadequate picture. I argue that while the metaphor is helpful with regards to the first theme, refinements are needed in its application to the second. Rather than see planning enforcement as a rational-scientific practice, a nuanced conceptualisation is needed that explicitly acknowledges the messy business of politics.

Keywords: Bauman, gardening state, space, informality, rational-scientific, development planning, development control, planning enforcement, Zimbabwe

INTRODUCTION

In 2002, a senior official in Zimbabwe's ruling ZANU-PF party achieved international notoriety when he stated: 'We would be better off with only six million people, with our own people […]. We don't want all these extra people' (Grundy, 2006). At the time, the country's population was around 12 million. That the infamous words were uttered by a powerful figure of a party whose rule has experienced no shortage of accusations of authoritarianism, repression and even genocide, was not lost to critics who read into this shocking statement intentions of a looming state-orchestrated genocide (see Engle and

Stanton, 2005). That neither the government nor the ruling party dissociated themselves from the infamous utterance heightened the speculation and gave the impression that this was a government view.

Unsurprisingly, the controversial statement was excavated when, in May 2005, the authorities launched 'Operation *Murambatsvina*/Restore Order' (OM/RO), the internationally (in)famous urban clean-up campaign that decimated urban informal housing and livelihoods (Kamete, 2009; Engle and Stanton, 2005). OM/RO displaced hundreds of thousands; many of them were carted off to concentration-camp-like holding centres (Tibaijuka, 2005).

The contentious statement suggests that the government did not need half of its resident population. They were 'extra people' – some kind of excess baggage. They were of no use and no value to the party, the government, and the country. Considered in the context of OM/RO, the declaration suggests that the act of getting rid of the excess baggage has a strong spatial dimension. Tellingly, the president revealed that OM/RO had been 'a long cherished desire' (Engle and Stanton, 2005), suggesting it had been rationally planned – not 'a temporary moment of madness' (Interview 1). The epitome of spatialised repression, OM/RO remains the archetypical spatialised cleansing campaign in southern Africa.

Any discussion of spatialised repression and cleansing would not be complete without reference to state-directed planning, which, unsurprisingly, played a key role in OM/RO (Kamete, 2007, 2009a). As the state's spatial technology of domination (Pile, 1997), planning is inevitably involved in the social engineering ambitions of the elite, particularly when this has to do with crafting, imposing and guaranteeing an artificially designed order (Bauman, 1991). In this article I assess the usefulness of deploying Bauman's metaphor of the 'gardening state', to illuminate the imbrication of planning and the 'dark side' of modernity (Yiftachel, 1998) especially as this relates to the public production and defence of 'pure' urban spaces suitable for people deemed to have value. Using empirical material from urban Zimbabwe, I reframe planning as a spatial technology of the gardening state. I peer into the handling of informality under two main themes: the perception, construction and designation of 'weeds'; and the declaration and treatment of the 'weeds'.

In reframing planning as a spatial technology of the gardening state, the article makes two key contributions to our understanding of planning vis-à-vis informality. First, in deploying Bauman's metaphor where, as far as I am aware of, it has not been used before, it provides fresh insights into the nexus between the state, planning and informality. Secondly, it uses empirical evidence to suggest some

refinements to Bauman's metaphor in its application to planning. In particular, by situating the metaphor in the nexus between the state, planning and informality, this article argues that the metaphor paints a helpful but inadequate picture. The article argues that while the metaphor does adequately capture the perception, construction and designation of informality and people associated with it as weeds, it needs to be refined when it comes to the declaration and treatment of the weeds. I argue that instead of interpreting this as a purely rational-scientific and technocratic practice, a nuanced approach is needed that adds 'irrational' political and social dimensions to the concept.

After the introduction, I discuss Bauman's metaphor of the 'gardening' state in light of related work in social theory, philosophy and planning, linking it with the public production of space. I then go on to frame planning as a technology of the gardening state using empirical material from urban Zimbabwe. I conclude by assessing the usefulness of Bauman's metaphor in providing insights into the nexus between planning, the state and informality.

THE GARDENING STATE AND SPATIAL PLANNING

Discussions of the 'gardening' state tend to focus on visible, spectacular, and often spasmodic, large-scale state-orchestrated schemes such as genocide, eugenics and the Holocaust (Bauman, 1991, 1993; Flitner, 2003; Mottier, 2008). We rarely see this metaphor being deployed to investigate localised, routine, and mundane state activities such as urban planning (cf. Scott, 1998; Binkley, 2009). It is my argument that 'gardening instincts or strategies' (Bauman 2005a) often find powerful expression in smaller variants and localised manifestations which could be the genesis of something big. Significantly, Bauman (1991:1) warns that the Holocaust was not a one-off moment of madness. It was not an outburst of pre-modern irrationality (Bauman, 1997:185). Rather, it was a manifestation of modernist rationality.

This is a warning that we should take seriously. A scrutiny of the localised and routine practices of state bureaucracies can yield valuable insights into these moments which we might misread as the outbreak of pre-modern irrationality. Critically analysing these practices, especially in authoritarian democratic states such as Zimbabwe, could potentially illuminate the conception and rationalisation of 'gardening' practices as well as their design, execution and outcomes. Admittedly, it cannot be claimed that this will lead to the prevention of such events; but it could provide refreshing insights for research and activism. It also yields material for reflection on the part of functionaries serving as foot soldiers in the effectuation of elitist visions of a 'better' society and providing the rational-scientific bases upon which the gardening state is predicated and rationalised (Bauman, 1991).

According to Bauman and May (2001:117) in modern times human order has become a subject of science and technology. This concern with order stems from the fear that without intervention and manipulation of social orders, chaos ensues. In one of his metaphors, Bauman (1993) describes the modern nation state as the 'gardening' state. In this 'garden', people deemed to have value as citizens are nurtured as 'good plants' whereas those seen as having no value are treated as 'weeds' – useless social undesirables (Bauman, 1991). The designation of desirable 'plants' and undesirable 'weeds' results in some people being convenient targets of scientistic state programmes 'to bring them into the desired pattern or place them outside the boundaries of the state' (Harrington, 2001:1). The gardening state is thus an expression of 'the attempts of humans to remake the world (Bauman and May, 2001:117), to create the "good society", a "perfect world"' (Jacobsen and Marshman, 2008:810). As a state-directed practice concerned with the will to improve (Li, 2007) through making better places (Healey, 2010), planning gets implicated in some of these attempts.

In its quest for a 'custom-made and purposefully designed world' (Bauman, 1993:33), the modern state has 'modelled its intentions and the prerogatives it claimed after the pattern of a gardener, a medical man, or an architect' (Bauman, 1993:178). This explains the state's proclivity for order, progress, wellbeing and betterment (Scott, 1998). This is something the state believes it can achieve through manipulating nature, whose processes the proponents of state-orchestrated manipulation consider as too slow, uncertain or inefficient (Bauman, 1993). The gardening state is the epitome of 'solid modernity' (Bauman, 1991; see Garrett, 2012) which as Jacobsen and Marshman (2008:811) assert, is 'all about "cultivation", planning and design' to improve and speed up the process of improvement.

The ascription of gardening ambitions to the state cannot be considered apart from politics. The centrality of the state raises questions about politics. It is therefore necessary to peer into Bauman's view of politics in relation to the concept of the gardening state. To be fair, Bauman's is a sociological rather than a political formulation. However, he does touch on and discuss politics. Bauman himself argues that "vision and practice tightly embrace each other" (1993:40). This is an important statement, especially since a reading of Bauman – for example, when he discusses the Nazis and Stalin – suggests that 'vision' is about political ideology (1993:40), and 'practice' is the implementation of that ideology through science and reason. It is political ideology that inspires and empowers the "normative, engineering ambitions that are inherent in all scientific practice" which he argues "lend themselves to political uses" (Bauman, 1993:40-41).

Bauman concludes that the "[gardening] ambitions … *are themselves politics*" (1993:41; my emphasis). This is as far as Bauman's view of politics in relation to the gardening state goes. He does not examine actual political practice or the internal workings of the state; nor does he suggest that the state is not a monolithic entity with different factions that think and act differently at different times. Rather than being a treatise on the workings or dynamics of politics Bauman's insights focus on the ambitions of the modern state and how it seeks to attain them. Thus, the modern state is "a crusading, missionary, proselytizing force, bent on subjecting the dominated populations […] in order to transform them into an orderly society" (Bauman 1993:20). This explains why Bauman 'politics' is confined to questions of ideology, policy, organisation, management and expertise (1991:74). Notably, when discussing the modern state's obsession with science and reason Bauman does not distinguish between "the substance of modern politics [and] of modern intellect" (1993:7), suggesting that politics is at one with science and reason.

Bauman (1993:178) describes the modern gardening state as 'a space-managing state'. This reference to space inevitably points to the involvement of spatial planning (cf. Flitner, 2003). Planning plays a key role in mediating space and creating place (RTPI, 2001), making it the perfect handmaiden of the state's gardening ambitions. Regardless of ideology, planning is the state's premier spatial technology of domination (see Ong, 2006; Kamete, 2010; Gulson, 2007). Arguably, all states are gardening states, the only variations being in the intensity, scope and frequency of the gardening practices and the zeal with which the gardening ambitions are pursued (cf. Bauman and May, 2001:117). Whatever the variations, the gardening ambition is the same; and the rationale is the same. With its rational procedures, science provides the means to capitalise on 'the perfectibility of the social order' (Sandercock, 2003:7). Control based on science and reason reduces the vagaries, unpredictability and randomness of nature as well as the volatility of markets (Bauman, 1993:1-2; Healey 2006).

Defined by Faludi as 'the application of scientific method … to policy making' (1973:1), planning has been deployed at its most scientistic as the gardening state's weapon of choice in the design, allocation and management of space in the human garden. Commenting on this scientistic conceptualisation of planning, Allmendinger (2009:31) explains that it sees 'planners as technocrats who [focus] upon procedures or processes – the means – while politicians and others set the ends.' In other words, in the gardening culture of modernity, the role of planning is to design the best way of realising the ambitions of the gardening state.

Despite some seismic shifts in planning theory elsewhere (Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2002; Hillier 2002; Allmendinger, 2009; Healey, 2006; Hillier and Gunder, 2010), these pretensions at science still dominate planning thought and practice in much of the global South (Njoh, 2003). Watson (2009:2016) notes the persistence in parts of the global South of 'techno-managerial … systems of government administration … and planning'. Here, systems theories influenced by developments in biological sciences (see McLoughlin, 1969; Chadwick, 1971), and their inseparable twin, the rational process theories with a strong appeal to the positivist science of decision-making (Taylor, 1998), still hold sway over planning thought and practice. Little wonder, planning is a potent tool of the gardening state. Notably, one of the foremost proponents of systems theory in planning argued that the image of planning must be drawn from gardening, not building (McLoughlin, 1969:24).

In the quest for a rationally planned and better designed societal garden (Bauman, 2005b:125), the materialisation of the gardening culture is primarily through and in space. Lefebvre's theorisation of space sheds light on the spatialisation of the gardening ambitions. Just as humans have conquered nature through science and technology, the gardening state has 'transformed – and mediated [space] – by technology, by practice' thereby giving rise to '*dominated* (and dominant) space' (Lefebvre, 1991:164, emphasis in original). According to Lefebvre (1991), this abstract space is the dominant space of society. It is the 'conceptualized space [...] of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers' (Lefebvre, 1991:39). This representation of space (Lefebvre, 1991:39) is the conceived space of knowledge and ideology (Djokovic, 2011): arguably, the space of the gardening state.

Commenting on Lefebvre's theory of space, Merrifield emphasises that abstract space is 'the product – the *materialization* – of what is conceived, a space of representation generalized' (Merrifield, 2006:111; emphasis in original). It is rationalised in terms of rational-scientific criteria. Unsurprisingly, the distinctive feature of abstract space is, at once, homogeneity and fragmentation (Shields, 1999:176-77). The rationally homogenised and fragmented space lends itself well to manipulation, order, surveillance and control, all traits of the gardening culture.

The outcome of abstract space – appropriately termed an 'objectified abstraction' by Merrifield (2006:111) – is 'an authoritarian and brutal spatial practice' which entails 'the effective application of the analytic spirit in and through dispersion, division and segregation' (Lefebvre, 1991:308). In a way that is reminiscent of Foucault's power-knowledge couplet (Foucault, 1995; Gordon, 1980), Lefebvre reminds us of the central role played by 'the fusion of the intelligible [...] with the political, [...] of

knowledge with power' (1991:308). This is what makes power-produced abstract space relentlessly dominant, giving it both its 'repressive and assimilative capacity' (Lefebvre, 1991:164).

Spatial forms produced by the utopian designs of the gardening state embody what Harvey (2000:182) terms 'closed authoritarianism'. Abstract space has no channels for viable opposition; it seeks to crush and vanquish lived experience (Merrifield, 2006:111). Like a locked document, the sponsors of abstract space desire it to be uneditable, at least not without the 'password' – the authority and authorisation of the state. Now, Foucault (1998:95) insists that 'where there is power there is resistance'. As Bauman (1991:92) puts it, 'there are weeds wherever there is a garden'. The gardening state prudently anticipates and attempts to incapacitate such resistance (Bauman, 1993:39). To this end, rationally included in the science of gardening are measures to neutralise other spaces: alternative spaces of resistance, deviance and non-conformity. Weeds that crop up have to be neutralised; and plants that degenerate have to be gardened out (Bauman, 1991:92). The garden has to be kept pure not only by keeping out – planning and designing out – the weeds, but also by getting rid of plants that are deemed to be or have become unsuitable. Thus, abstract space is both a *product* and a *weapon* of the gardening spate. Not surprisingly, it 'tends to sweep everybody along, moulding people and places in its image' (Merrifield, 2006:112).

PLANNING AND THE GARDENING STATE IN ZIMBABWE

In this section, I discuss planning as a spatial technology of the gardening state in Zimbabwe. The purpose is to determine the extent to which the gardening state as theorised by Bauman was at work in urban planning in a particular context during a particular period. To this end, I will discuss empirical findings based on fieldwork undertaken in two phases in 2010, 2011 and 2012 (see Table 1). The fieldwork is part of my research on planning, planners and informality. In addition to official plans, pronouncements and legislation,[1] this article uses empirical material from 17 interviews. Apart from practicing and retired planners, participants in the study included senior civil servants, activists and political heavyweights, both local and national (see Table 1). The interviews centred on views, experiences and attitudes regarding planning and the handling of informality and informals.

Table 1. Interview Participants and Details

Interview ID	Details	Interview Date
Interview 1	Town Planner	20 December 2010
Interview 2	Senior Civil Servant	5 January 2011
Interview 3	Central Government Planner	22 December 2010
Interview 4	Civil Society Activist	20 July 2012
Interview 5	Principal Planner	20 December 2010
Interview 6	Academic	19 December 2010
Interview 7	Planning Consultant	19 December 2010
Interview 8	Town Planner	16 July 2012
Interview 9	Retired Planner	20 July 2012
Interview 10	Senior Planning Officer	22 December 2010
Interview 11	Legal expert	18 December 2010
Interview 12	Retired Municipal Police Officer	16 July 2012
Interview 13	Former Councillor	18 December 2010
Interview 14	Former Councillor	5 January 2011
Interview 15	Deputy Minister	20 July 2012
Interview 16	Cabinet Minister	7 January 2011
Interview 17	Provincial Governor and Resident Minister	16 July 2012

The gardening ambitions

There is little doubt that the authorities in Zimbabwe 'unapologetically aspire towards orderly planned, prosperous settlements' (Interview 17). The interviews exposed strongly entrenched gardening ambitions. A senior town planner maintained that the government needed urban areas to be planned, because 'planning brings certainty and control where chaos would otherwise be the alternative' (Interview 1). This is not just the view of a senior bureaucrat. A cabinet minister, who is also a ruling party heavyweight, maintained that when it comes to human settlements, '*kunyanya madhorobeni* [particularly urban areas], the state's role is to achieve goals and ambitions by continuously controlling, re-channelling and redirecting nature' (Interview 16). To him, nature cannot be left to its own devices, so 'a competent government controls and manipulates nature [in order to] replace chaos with order that benefits its citizens'. A deputy cabinet minister was convinced that 'getting the mastery [*sic*] over nature is what governments should do' (Interview 15). She continued,

> In government, if natural processes dictate your every move, that is a dangerous *laissez-faire* [*sic*]. It leads to anarchy. […] We believe that control through urban planning brings order and prevents this anarchy and gets us to our exact destination more quickly and efficiently.

A provincial governor summed it up thus: 'The state is about order which allows everyone to thrive and prosper and the nation to develop. This is what progressive states do and we make no apologies for this' (Interview 17).

None of the participants in the study explicitly referred to a 'garden' or 'gardening'. However, their conviction in order and control coupled with the aversion to chaos betray gardening ambitions. They believe in designing a custom-made world (Bauman, 1993:33). So far, though, there is no reference to useless weeds and good plants. However, the order they aspire to necessarily entails choosing some futures and rejecting others. A senior civil servant described this as 'a conscious decision to follow a path, to choose a vision […], rejecting some alternative paths *and those misfits who stubbornly travel the rejected paths'* (Interview 3, emphasis added). It seems that the quest for a purposefully designed world produces some 'hopeless and dangerous renegades and misfits who must be spewed out' (Interview 1). This implies that there will be some people who will travel along the chosen path (good plants?) and those who 'stubbornly travel the rejected paths' (useless weeds?). A clearer picture of this emerged when the conversations focused on planning, which the interviewees identified as 'crucially important in establishing order and stamping out disorder' (Interview 5).

Planning as a spatial technology of the gardening state

To what extent has planning embraced the 'gardener's posture' (Bauman, 2005a) towards the city? In addressing this question, this section focuses on two key aspects: the perception, construction and designation of 'plants' and 'weeds'; and the declaration and treatment of 'weeds'. To accomplish this, I will zero in on the three main processes that constitute the mediation of space and the making of place, namely, development planning, development control and planning enforcement.

Development planning

Also known as 'forward planning', development planning is the part of planning that is concerned with policy and the making of plans. In urban planning this is where the vision for the city or town is articulated. It is a profoundly rational-scientific practice guided by reason and evidence. A retired planner, who boasted of having 'seen it all over many donkey years [*sic*]' asserted, 'To make plans you need to be systematic. Systematic in thinking and systematic in the process […]. I am talking of the scientific approach.' (Interview 9). As prescribed by Zimbabwe's premier planning legislation, the *Regional, Town and Country Planning Act* (RTCPA, 1996), development planning requires the meticulous study and analysis of physical, social and economic trends, explaining them and forecasting

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them. Reflecting on this, a principal planner declared, 'We don't leave things to chance or proceed blindly. It's all about evidence based on science and reason from alpha to omega' (Interview 5).

Significantly, planning at the city level is 'neither autonomous nor insulated – it is part of a bigger picture' (Interview 11). As such, it should support the goals of the (gardening) state. This explains why the whole process of making plans is 'a top-down process rooted in the scientific positivism of the rational comprehensive planning model' (Interview 6). The Act prescribes a hierarchy of plans which Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are required to produce: Regional Plans, Master Plans, Local Plans, and Subject Plans (RTCPA, 1996). Emphasizing the importance of the hierarchy, the cabinet minister explained (Interview 16):

> The top-down hierarchy ensures that the goals of the highest authority in the land, i.e., the Government of Zimbabwe, are paramount. Each lower tier must conform to the plans above it. Any deviation from the top layer renders it [the lower tier plan] a nullity. At the end of the day, what you should see reflected even at the lowest levels are the dreams and aspirations of the state […] with no contradiction.

This ensures that the reason and science that are the bases of the gardening state are not lost down the spatial and administrative hierarchy. What the state has to do is infuse its gardening ambitions at the top tiers of the system and they will diffuse to individual land parcels in specific cities. The difference between plans at the various tiers is not in the content or aspirations, but 'in scale, specificity and detail' (Interview 8). No amount of decentralisation, devolution or democracy can generate plans that conflict with the higher order national interest. Relevant legal provisions ensure the supremacy of the higher-level plans. This allows for the 'purging of deviations and conflicts with the higher-level plans' (Interview 7), thereby protecting the ideals of the gardening state.

Unsurprisingly, development plans are about order in the use of land. According to the Act, the general objective of the plan at any level is to 'to ensure the co-ordinated development' of the area (RTCPA, 1996, s 5(2)). Amplifying this, a local authority senior planning officer stated that 'the plan sets the objective parameters for order and control in the occupation and use of land' (Interview 10). According to the Act, a master plan, which in Zimbabwe cover the whole area under each LPA's jurisdiction, 'formulate[s] the policies of [the] authority and its general proposals for the planning area in respect of the co-ordinated and harmonious development or redevelopment and other uses of land' (s 14(2)(a)). To the retired planner, 'ensuring order coordination and harmony in land use [is] the cornerstone of our esteemed planning system' (Interview 9).

It is in these plans, the gardening documents, that the designation and construction of weeds and plants is done. There is no better way to do this than to look at actual plans that have been approved. I will look at one master plan and two local development plans. The Harare Combination Master Plan (HCMP) was approved in 1992. As 'a professional and thoroughly scientifically grounded document' (Interview 8) it contains a mine of demographic, social and economic data. The proposals, directives and land allocations in the HCMP refer to, and are all backed by, this data (City of Harare, 1992). Accordingly, the HCMP is a 'gardening' document. The identification of weeds is apparent when the HCMP 'authoritatively pronounces what is appropriate [plants] and what is unwelcome [weeds] in given areas' (Interview 7). For example, disorderly subdivisions are banned, whereas orderly 'densification' is given the nod. As asserted by the senior planning officer, 'these directives are based on the scientifically assessed shortage of land, given the rationally determined relentless increase in the population of the plan area' (Interview 10).

Whereas the HCMP lays out proposals for the larger plan area, it is in the local development plans (LDPs) that the gardening ambitions find specific expression. It is these plans that directly influence the development and use of land in specific localities. One of the most contentious LDPs in Harare is the Borrowdale Local Development Plan (Number 32), which was approved in August 1997 (City of Harare, 1997).[2] The LDP opens by declaring its compliance to the RTCPA and that it 'incorporates the provisions of the [HCMP]' (page 2). Vouching for its rational-scientific basis, the plan asserts that it is based on objective information that was 'collected by field socio-economic surveys and primary field analysis of existing and adjacent data [*sic*]' (page 2).

It is only after vouching for this 'compliance and scientific authenticity' (Interview 5) that the plan goes on to state its purpose. This includes, among other things providing 'a detailed land-use plan to guide redevelopment in the area in terms of the provisions of the [...] [HCMP] and perceived needs of the area' (page 3). After taking stock of the existing situation and identifying problems and opportunities 'based on the objective analysis in the mandatory *Report of the Study'* (Interview 7), the LDP goes on to lay out planning policies. It is here that the 'weeds' and the 'good plants' are identified and measures to deal with them are spelt out. For example, one of the key problems highlighted is about infrastructure 'with the major areas of concern being traffic and sewerage with both leading to adverse environmental effect' (page 29). The data shows that traffic problems are caused by public transport used by poorer urbanites. Consequently, the proposed rational solutions include closing off some roads, redirecting traffic, banning

public transport in some areas, and relocating public transport termini to suitable areas. Evidently, the aim is to 'keep the disruptive activities and people [useless weeds?] out' (Interview 3).

The classic and most prominent measures for the 'garden' revolve around land-use zoning. This effectively designates what is desirable (and permitted) and what is not desirable (and not permitted) in particular urban spaces. The LDP has more than 20 'use groups'. To accommodate them, the land is rationally chopped up into suitable pieces and allocated to specified uses based on 'scientific' analyses of the characteristics and requirements of such uses. For each parcel of land, no other use is permitted apart from uses in the same use group. Some uses that might be deemed compatible are subject to 'special consent'. In the end, then, the garden has three stipulations: 'permitted' (good plants), 'not permitted' (clear-cut weeds), and 'special consent'. It is the prerogative of the LPA to decide if any use is a plant or a weed.

The LDP does not name or classify people per se. Nevertheless, the identification of what is (and could be) legal or illegal in given spaces clearly involves *people associated with those activities or things*. Unsurprisingly, Watson (2009:2061) notes the obsessions in 20th century master plans with 'preventing the invasion of less desirable lower-income residents' and the turning of planning into a tool to exclude the poor. That vending is not allowed at commercial centres means vendors are banned there. Activities are inseparable from people who practice them. Indeed, the fact that informality is not even mentioned in the LDP of the affluent area means that people who generate informal livelihoods are not welcome there. They are the weeds that must be kept out of the garden.

The same is true of Harare's City Centre Local Development Plan (Number 22) (City of Harare, 1994). The LDP leaves no doubt that 'the city centre is a place for formal business in the retail, services and other sectors' (Interview 6). Informality is confined to peripherally located bus termini, most of them now disused thanks to the collapse of the state-owned bus company. Outside these confined areas, ambulant trading is outlawed because it conflicts with the LDP, the principal gardening edict. Elaborating on this, the senior planning officer explained:

> Order is created by defining disorder and outlawing it [disorder]. Our plans objectively designate what belongs and should not belong. That's why vendors are not wanted because they do not belong where they are patronizing [*sic*] according to the plan. When what does not belong forces a presence, it is impartially identified and dealt with.

This statement reveals two clear activities: first the perception, construction and designation of 'what belongs' (good plants) and 'should not belong' (useless weeds); and second, taking action when the weeds 'force a presence'. Whereas the first fits the concept of the gardening state, there is a problem with the second.

Development management

In a typical gardening state, where 'rational reason is paramount' (Interview 8), we would expect regular and systematic weeding (Bauman, 1991:92). After all, this is a straightforward task. The weeds having been so designated in the plan, can be identified and cleared as and when they sprout. This should be 'a very predictable legal technocratic endeavour' (Interview 6). However, this research reveals this is not always the case. To show this I will discuss the practices that are supposed to implement the development plan, namely, development control and planning enforcement.

Development control is the part of the planning system through which LPAs regulate land-use and development. It primarily entails the 'policing of space through scrutiny and deciding on planning applications' (Interview 3). Because ownership rights are separated from development rights, anyone wanting to carry out 'development'[3] is required to apply for planning permission from the LPA. In Zimbabwe's plan-led system, planning applications are granted or refused on the basis of the development plan. This ensures that the aspiration for order and improvement enshrined in the gardening edict (the LDP) find material expression on the abstract spaces created by that plan. In stipulating the legal basis for ensuring that 'development' complies with the LDP, the Act criminalises development that has no planning permission. It thus provides the legal basis for eradicating useless weeds.

Obviously, for any development to be given the green light it has to conform to the precepts of abstract space. This explains why Lefebvre (1991) avers that abstract space – the space conceived and created by the gardening state – is the dominant space. By prescribing conformity with their representations of space, the authorities want to prevent weeds from springing up and thriving in the garden. But then, all too often the weeds, the imperfect, defecting and contaminating 'other' spaces, do spring up. That is when planning enforcement springs into action.

Planning enforcement. It is in planning enforcement that we can assess the gardening state's resolve to eliminate weeds, what Bauman (1991:13) terms 'weed-poisoning'. Planning enforcement enables the gardening state to get rid of weeds, the 'non-compliant things and activities and the people associated

with them' (Interview 10). The RTCPA (1996, s 32(1)) contains clear provisions for enforcement 'if it appears to the [LPA] that any development has been or is being carried out in contravention of this Act.' Also clearly stipulated is the basis for declaring the violation. In the same section, the Act states that the LPA will have 'regard to the provisions of any operative [...] plan'. In other words, as the authoritative gardening documents, LDPs serve as the templates for the declaration of infraction and the identification, naming and treatment of weeds.

Before examining what happens in practice, it is instructive to outline what *should* happen if planning enforcement were to fit Bauman's notion of the gardening state. The Act, stipulates that upon detecting a violation, which essentially is a deviation from the norm as stipulated in the plan, the LPA notifies the offender through an enforcement order. According to section 32 of the Act, the enforcement order, firstly, states the nature of the contravention, and secondly, specifies the action required to be taken by the offender within a stipulated period. Notably, the order will demand action that restores the integrity of the garden so it continues on the path to perfection to achieve the desires of the gardener state. The remedial actions include the retrospective submission of an application for planning permission; the restoration of the land to its condition before the violation took place; the demolition or alteration of any building; and the discontinuance of the violation (RTCPA, 1996, s 32(2)).

Legally, enforcement orders take effect after a month. After this period, the LPA will step in to remove the weeds through actions such as demolitions or evictions. Before the expiry of this period, the offender can appeal. An appeal suspends the operation of the order until the appeal is finally determined. To ensure that LPAs are not crippled by lengthy court cases while the garden is being overrun by weeds, the law gives them a potent weapon: the prohibition order. The prohibition order takes effect immediately and overrides any planning appeal. Through this instrument, the gardening state ensures that its ambitions are not scuttled by weeds 'through strategic time-buying or some mischievous timewasting legal manoeuvring' (Interview 3).

In practice, however, there are 'severe deviations, gaps and discrepancies between what's prescribed and what happens on the ground' (Interview 11). On the basis of the LDP it 'shouldn't be rocket science to promptly unambiguously identify undesirable activities and things' (Interview 8). Further, the Act is clear on what should happen in cases of violation. However, when it comes to action, 'what should become pure technocratic straightforward routines that even the most mediocre professional can execute with aplomb' (Interview 6) become 'complicated politically charged shenanigans' (Interview 4). Most

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decisions on the declaration of the infraction and the execution of appropriate remedies 'are time and time again snatched from the professional realm and thrust into the realms of irrationality through unwarranted political interference' (Interview 5). Justifying the 'inevitable supremacy of political decision-making in enforcing planning matters' the cabinet minister stressed:

> Let me adumbrate, […] we in government see everything about planning as important. Crafting the regulatory framework such as plans is a backstage activity. The front-row game about actually deciding to take action and putting that into motion is a completely different kettle of fish. We cannot allow a situation where seminal decisions concerning livelihoods and housing are delegated to unelected bureaucrats.

Given this political stance, it is little wonder that one of the planners complained: 'In planning enforcement, every time something big is on the table, the politicians have always called the shots' (Interview 1). The deputy minister agreed, arguing that taking action on illegal activities was 'about determining the state and trajectory of our urban areas which should be political duties … and in the scheme of things, political decisions do not always align with bureaucratic requirements and prescriptions' (Interview 15).

If we take the 'bureaucratic requirements and prescriptions' as comprising the statutory and regulatory framework for planning, the deputy minister is correct. In Zimbabwe's planning system, political decisions do not always align with this framework. Sometimes there are 'pretty serious departures from the norm' (Interview 10). There is no better illustration of this point than the 2005 'Operation *Murambatsvina*/Restore Order' (OM/RO), a massive nationwide urban clean-up campaign that decimated informality in urban Zimbabwe (Kamete, 2009a). As a result of OM/RO, one in six urban dwellers (700,000) directly lost their homes and/or livelihood sources; an estimated 46% (2.1 million) were indirectly affected (Tibaijuka, 2005:33; Kamete 2009a:898). On the face of it, OM/RO shows the gardening state at work. This is especially the case if one considers the references to informals as 'filth' and 'crawling maggots' (Kamete, 2007:153). These abusive insults reveal that people targeted by the campaign were weeds that had to be eradicated for the garden to flourish.

Planning featured prominently during and after OM/RO. The authorities insisted OM/RO was 'a programme to enforce by-laws to stop all forms of illegal activities' (City of Harare, 2005). They invoked the RTPCA and consistently justified the operation in terms of planning (Kamete, 2009a). They framed their arguments in a way that left no doubt that 'planning' allowed them to do what they did. However, planners on the ground told a different story on the 'purported primacy of planning' (Interview 5).

According to the retired planner who was at 'the forefront of the action and the stinking dirty work' (Interview 9):

> Everyone knows that planning was too small, … that planners were too puny for the exercise. Planning was mobilized by government, but not in the proper way prescribed in law. You see, … the decision to launch *Murambatsvina* was a government, actually a party decision, and it was very, very political. I don't think they even thought of planning until some smart aleck said, 'Comrades, we can justify all this chicanery by invoking planning'.

Echoing this, a senior civil servant who claims he 'should have been at the heart of *Murambatsvina* if things were done according to stipulated procedure' revealed that as 'technical and legal considerations were subservient to political convenience, … government dumped rationality and reason and took a fundamentally irrational political route' (Interview 2). Even local authorities and councillors were 'bypassed [as] central government unilaterally usurped and concentrated all decisions in its own hands irregardless of law [*sic*] or set procedure' (Interview 14). A retired senior municipal police officer, whose line managers should have been in the local authority, revealed that he 'received threatening instructions directly from the [ruling] party and reported to the party' (Interview 12).

Assessing the influence of planning in OM/RO, a former councillor who was in one city's Planning and Environmental Management Committee stated: 'On a scale of zero to 10, I would say approximately 0.5, and that is because it was mentioned on the official launch of the campaign' (Interview 13). Another former councillor who was in the Executive Committee of the same city and believed he 'should have been involved in the goings-on if things were executed properly' was equally scathing, giving planning 'a zero for contribution to decisions leading to the campaign … and a one for being a convenient afterthought' (Interview 14).

DEBATING PLANNING AND THE GARDENING STATE

Through planning, the gardening state spatialises its ambitions through abstract space, itself an objectified abstraction (Merrifield, 2006:111). It is born of scientistic practices that are at once authorised and emboldened by the modern state. On the face of it, the identification of citizens and weeds is not a capricious and malicious practice. It is a product of science and reason (see Barnes and Minca, 2013). It follows Bauman's two-step process. First, the 'issues of desirability of order and the duty of the rulers to administer its introduction are settled' (1993:30). Second, once this is settled 'the rest is a matter of cool calculation of costs and effects' (1993:30). This is a techno-legal exercise delegated to planners – trained

experts in the service of the gardening state. This research suggests the first step applies to Zimbabwe during the time of the study; but it exposes the limitations of Bauman's theorisation regarding the second.

The meticulous studies, calculations and reasoned justification that go into the crafting and production of development plans in Zimbabwe are imbued with sound technical knowledge: knowledge of how the world works, how it should work, and importantly, what is needed to bridge the gap between what *is* and what *ought* to be. The transition from knowledge to action (Friedmann, 1987) which should usher in the desired well-planned garden (Bauman, 2005b) is the mandate of planning. It is this that preoccupies planners when they craft plans based on rational knowledge. This is what they seek when they use that knowledge to produce authoritative rational plans, which to all intents and purposes, have as their goal the spatialisation and materialisation of the state's gardening ambitions.

Invariably in the rational-scientific production of rational plans, some things and practices are valorised: formal housing and formal business are useful to the ambitions of the gardening state. The people associated with these things and practices are given value as citizens; they are the good plants. Simultaneously, other things and practices are devalorised. Hence, informal housing and livelihood practices are inferior and useless; they have no place in the garden. People associated with 'these abominable inferiorities' (Interview 10) are similarly denied value; they become useless and dangerous weeds. The weeds are planned and designed out – gardened out – by means of LDPs. This is 'graduated citizenship' (Ong, 2000, 2006) in its most spatialised and materialised forms. The plan is a rational-scientific roadmap to an orderly city. It is the product of the technical genius of planners, who through their role as 'means-end technicians' (Friedmann, 1987; see Lo Piccolo and Thomas, 2008; Klosterman 1978) translate the ambitions of the gardening state into a spatialised reality.

Bauman (1993:29) states that achieving the good, orderly and healthy society – the garden – entails the 'systematic and ruthless … execution of a scientifically conceived rational plan'. Hence, we would expect the authorities to systematically execute the LDP by wielding the powers enshrined in the RTCPA. However, at times the state deems its own technologies inadequate or too cumbersome to effectively exterminate stubborn weeds. In such cases, the state can and does flout its own gardening edicts by disregarding legally stipulated procedures in enforcing planning regulations. This is what happened during OM/RO. The state stood outside its own law on enforcement orders, demolitions and evictions (Kamete, 2007). This disregard of the law is not a mere moment of mindless injustice. Whereas everybody is supposed to follow the planning law to the letter, the state as the sovereign can stand outside

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the juridical order by declaring a state of exception (see Agamben, 1998; 2005; Roy, 2005). Thus, the legal constraints that might shackle the gardening state and derail the gardening ambitions are suspended and/or overcome.

What does this tell us about the applicability of the concept of the gardening state to planning in Zimbabwe? The deviations expose the limitations of the concept in planning. There are three significant deviations. First, while the rational plan counts as a gardening document, the treatment of the weeds sometimes does not follow the plan. It seems, in its emphasis on scientific reason, Bauman's concept does not account for the messy business of politics, especially in decisions regarding the eradication of weeds. As regards OM/RO, from the state's perspective, the context made strict adherence to scientific rationality 'untenable, tricky, ill-advised ... virtually impossible' (Interview 16). There were two reasons for this, both of them not about planning per se. They are (1) the disjunction between the control of local and central government; and (2) the urgency occasioned by perceived threats to national security and the ruling party. OM/RO took place at a time when the state could not be considered a monolithic entity. The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) controlled urban councils, which are the LPAs, while the ruling ZANU-PF controlled central government.

This disjunction meant that the state could not 'conceivably outsource national policy to enemy-controlled councils' (Interview 15). According to the deputy minister, 'the best strategic and optimal option was to bypass or neutralise bureaucratic rituals and low-level administrations through political appropriation of deciding powers [*sic*] by central government' (Interview 15). There was some urgency to this, because issues of national security were at stake (GoZ, 2005). Informal housing and businesses had become more than a nuisance in the garden. They had mutated into 'veritable threats to national security' (Interview 17). The majority of urban residents had turned against the ruling party by consistently voting for the opposition since 2000 (Kamete, 2010). In addition, informals were routinely accused of sabotaging the national economy through a parasitic parallel market (Kamete, 2009a). Moreover, to ZANU-PF 'the combination of their anger, restlessness and unpredictable volatility was a real threat to national security' (Interview 15).[4]

The second deviation from Bauman's metaphor revolves around the resilience and resistance of the weeds (see Kamete, 2010; 2012). OM/RO was big 'because its target [informality] had become ginormous' (Interview 1). For all its eagerness to 'implement all plans to the very letter [*sic*] and religiously follow planning law' (Interview 4), the 'weeds' could not be contained. They resisted by

'refusing to be discarded' (Interview 12) and were resilient in that each time they were swept away 'they somehow always bounced back' (Interview 4). The absence of viable livelihoods and housing alternatives made sure of this (Kamete, 2009b). It seems then, the gardening state concept here finds another limitation. Weed resistance and resilience sometimes makes the situation spiral out of control, thereby necessitating deviations from 'bureaucratic rituals' because in the eyes of the elite 'planning [science and reason] on its own cannot tackle an urgent situation that is thoroughly out of control' (Interview 8). In such situations, politics takes over.

Linked to the above is the third deviation: the timing of the action against the 'weeds'. Keeping the garden free of weeds should be a regular activity. Planning enforcement should be 'a routine exercise – like cleaning your house on a regular basis' (Interview 5). Zimbabwe has 'one of the most active, alive and functional planning systems in the region' (Interview 7; see Kamete 2009b). That informality and its illegal use and occupation of land had reached the levels it did by the time OM/RO was launched suggest that 'something was not going according to plan' (Interview 2). Some weeds had become rooted and some 'illegal, businesses, tuckshops and houses had been built to last … brick mortar and what not' (Interview 14). In all urban areas, illegal businesses had taken root as informal enterprises 'grew, multiplied, expanded and grew again' (Interview 17). The reason for this was politics.

Sometimes the planning system was hamstrung by 'instructions from on high [by] politicians lining up for votes' (Interview 5); by the 'scared ruling party importing its own [informals] into cities to improve its election chances by diluting the opposition vote' (Interview 4); and by 'pure naked incompetence, bribery and corruption at all levels' (Interview 3). Faced with such obstacles, planning was 'frequently paralysed from making the big decisions [*sic*] to execute planning according to plans and legislation' (Interview 9). The paralysing of the system was often intensified in the run-up to elections, when influential politicians were angling for votes. Interestingly, OM/RO was launched when 'votes were not the concern of any politician' (Interview 4). It came immediately after a general election, in which the ruling party again lost the urban vote, with another election five years away. This suggests that gardening inclinations were overridden by 'conscious national political reaction and calculation' (Interview 15).

CONCLUSION

Bauman's notion of the gardening state allows his sociological thinking to be applied in the realm of space and place. This provides a theoretical linkage that opens up his critical thinking to planning theory.

This article suggests that while there is some fit between the metaphor of the gardening state and urban planning in Zimbabwe during the period of the study, the concept has some limitations in its applicability.

The metaphor illuminates key things about planning in Zimbabwe. It explains why and how for the modern state perfection remains a powerful goal. Through planning, the state has tried to impose order on cities by making plans and rooting out imperfections. The state has used the expertise of state-sponsored experts such as planners to landscape the human garden (Weiner, 2003). The metaphor usefully confirms and extends what we know. It confirms that as a technology of the gardening state, planning has sought to introduce an optimal order based on scientific rationality (Schiel, 2005). But it goes further. Sandercock (2003:29) reminds us that 'the new conception of the state's role that … emerged out of the Enlightenment was the idea that the central purpose of the state was the improvement of all members of society.' This statement needs qualification. And Bauman's metaphor comes in handy here. It exposes how, in the process of trying to improve society, *some* members of society – the useless and undesirable weeds – are seen as standing in the way of that improvement (Bauman, 1991:18).

The metaphor exposes why and how as a state-directed spatial technology, planning is inevitably entangled in the gardener state's rational social engineering ambitions, especially when this has to do with securing order for an artificially designed world. Deploying Bauman's utopian metaphor therefore provides useful insights into the extent of planning's entanglement in the 'dark side' of modernity, particularly as it relates to the rational production and defence of urban spaces suitable for useful 'plants' where useless 'weeds' are not allowed to grow, let alone thrive.

In light of the above, to the extent that the metaphor of the gardening state exposes scientists guided by an uncontested understanding of the role and mission of science and feeling of duty among planners to the vision of a good, healthy and orderly society (Bauman, 1993:29), it can be usefully extended and applied in the realm of spatial planning in contexts such as urban Zimbabwe. It certainly provides a very useful lens for peering into and explaining the quest for order and the perception, construction and designation of some people and activities as weeds that have no place in the garden that is the modern city. It exposes the role of planning as a science in the perception and designation of weeds, which is an important precursor to the public declaration and treatment of weeds.

However, empirical findings in this article suggest that the metaphor's amplification of the authority of science falls short in illuminating the public declaration of informality as weeds and its 'treatment' by

means of eradication or containment. This applies to the concept's emphasis on the 'systematic and ruthless … execution of a scientifically conceived rational plan' (Szarbo, 2002). Politics and the socio-economic and political context need to be factored in. Contrary to what one of the interviewees claimed, in Zimbabwe, planning's rational-scientific calculations are not 'always invariably filtered and mediated through politics' (Interview 8). In the 'real big … spectacular phenomena' (Interview 4) such as OM/RO, planning is sidestepped or ignored. At times, it is commandeered as an afterthought to serve as the handmaiden of repression (Kamete, 2009a). In such cases, planning's public articulation of the techno-legal dimensions of the treatment of weeds does not prove the dominance of rational science. Rather it exposes *rationalisation* at work (Flyvbjerg, 1998). This suggests that an important modification is needed in the extension of this metaphor to planning.

What study discussed in this paper tells us is that in Zimbabwe's urban planning, Bauman's metaphor makes a closer fit to development planning than it does to development control and planning enforcement. The construction of an artificial order through rational-scientific reason and the formalisation of that order through legislative and regulatory control (cf. Bauman, 1993:178) reflects the situation in development planning. However, as we move towards development control and planning enforcement, the realm of actual action against weeds, the dominance of rational-scientific reason wanes, adherence to the legal and regulatory framework fades, and the influence of the planning bureaucracy is eroded as politics takes over. At this stage contrary to Bauman's suggestions, politics is not at one with science and reason. This is where Bauman's metaphor falls short.

However, these limitations do not make the metaphor inappropriate or inapplicable. Rather it suggests that extending the concept to planning in Zimbabwe, and indeed much of southern Africa where this pattern is replicated (Berrisford and Kihato, 2007), calls for some modifications. These modifications relate to factoring in the messy business of politics. It is easy to adhere to science and reason in the making of the plan. However, when it comes to planning enforcement, especially where the big decisions have to be made, some contextual factors may generate deviations from science and reason. Politics takes over. At such times, the ruling elite might consider planning too puny or unreliable to deal with what they perceive as urgent issues such as state security and national politics.

Notes

[1] The plans examined are *Harare Combination Master Plan; City Centre Local Development Plan (No. 22); and Borrowdale Local Development Plan (No. 32).* The legislation looked at is the premier planning legislation, namely, the *Regional Town*

and Country Planning Act. The key pronouncements examined are: *The Speech by the Chairperson of the Harare Commission* (City of Harare, 2005); and the *Response by Government of Zimbabwe to the Report by the UN Special Envoy Order* (GoZ, 2005). Full bibliographic details are in the references.

[2] A wealthy suburb of Harare, Borrowdale is one of the most affluent areas in the country.

[3] The RTCPA (1996, s 22(1)) defines development as 'the carrying out in, on, over or under the land of any building or mining operations … [and] the altering of the character of the use of any land or building'. In the UK planning system, which was the template used by the drafters of the Act in colonial Zimbabwe, these two 'legs' of the definition of development are summarised as 'operations' and 'uses' (Duxbury and Telling, 2006:131).

[4] In a country were party and government are inseparable, 'national security' can also be interpreted as the interests of the ruling elite.

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